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Affliction without Affliction

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Commentaries**

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Affliction without Affliction.

A Translation of the Nakulapitāsutta and its Commentaries¹

Giuliano Giustarini

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Abstract

This article consists of a study of two commentaries to the Nakulapitāsutta, a Buddhist text from the Pali Khandhasaṃyutta. This sutta addresses the key concept of liberation from the perspective of illness, decay and death, and offers an incisive description of the five aggregates of personality.

The two commentaries present variegated exegetical approaches to the root-text, mostly based upon a sophisticated system of cross-references wisely intertwined with a bulk of original elucidations. This combination illustrates some prominent aspects of Pali Buddhist philosophy and provides a precious series of lexicographical interpretations that surely deserve further studies.

Keywords: Pali Buddhist commentaries, five aggregates, illness, death, self

1. Contents of the Nakulapitāsutta and strategies of interpretation

The Nakulapitāsutta, the first discourse of the Pali Khandhasaṃyutta, addresses the existential issue of illness by examining the five aggregates in the light of the absence of a separate self. Unlike other discourses dealing with illness, it does not raise specific ethical dilemmas such as the question on the consequences of committing suicide in case of incurable and unbearable illnesses,² and does not provide much information about the administration of medical care, but it directly addresses the dynamics of mental suffering. In the story told in the Nakulapitāsutta, in fact, the Buddha indicates the possibility of maintaining the mind unaffected by sickness, and his chief disciple Sāriputta expands upon this option by giving a teaching on the five aggregates.³ The mind is afflicted because of the identification/appropriation of any or all of the five aggregates perceived as a self or related to a self. Conversely, the mind unafflicted is not enslaved to this wrong perception. The text thus echoes other discourses that emphasize a healthy state of mind, like the Māgaṇḍīyasutta (M 75, CST4 II.207 ff., PTS I.501-513), where the final liberation, *nibbāna*, is defined as *ārogya* (PED: health,

² See the Channovādasutta (M 144, CST4 III.389-394, PTS III.263-266), the Godhikasutta (S CST4 I.159, PTS I.120-122), and the Vakkalisutta (S CST4 III.87, PTS II.119-124). These suttas have been thoroughly examined in Delhey 2006.

³ The scheme of the Nakulapitāsutta contains itself some features of commentarial literature: the brief piece of advice given by the Buddha to Nakulapitar is a *saṅkhittena* (condensed) teaching, whereas the explanation of Sāriputta is its *vittharena* (expanded) counterpart.

absence of illness), opposed to the deluded mind (compared to a leper or to someone born blind), and the well-known Sallasutta (S CST4 IV.54, PTS IV.207-210) where, in the presence of a physical affliction, the mind may either generate further suffering or it may not be afflicted at all.

The present article consists in a translation of the Pali Nakulapitāsutta (S CST4 III.1, PTS III.1-5) and its commentaries, i.e. the Pali aṭṭhakathā (Sāratthapakāsinī, S-a CST4 III.1, PTS II.249-256), and the puraṇa-ṭīkā (Līnatthappakāsinī III, CST4 S-pt III.1). These two exegeses of the Nakulapitāsutta first deal with the circumstances of the teachings, especially by describing the location and its historical origin, and the wearisome conditions of the recipient, the householder Nakulapitar. In the light of the depth and subtlety of the teaching herein expounded, the complementary details provided by the commentaries reveal to be paramount: for instance, the list of the cognate terms that describe the old age and decrepitude of Nakulapitar in the root text, is explained in the commentaries in a way that ascribes a specific set of information to each single term, thus helping understand the content and the motivation of Nakulapitar's request. Indeed, his physical suffering, rather than accidental, appears to be the inevitable burden carried by the cycle of existence (*samsāra*). Nakulapitar is presumably expecting a remedy that would lead him beyond *samsāra* itself, and the Buddha's reply, along with Sāriputta's teaching, points out a method to preserve the mind from these afflictions.

In accordance with the Pali commentarial tradition, the aṭṭhakathā and the ṭīkā proceed through two distinct layers of lexicographical glosses, enmeshed within a net of cross-references variously illustrating the contents of the root-text. In the Nakulapitāsutta-aṭṭhakathā, Buddhaghosa borrows some passages and phrasings from two books of the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, i.e. the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Vibhaṅga, and uses extensive elucidations which occur also in his own commentary on the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Atthasālinī. Interestingly, some glosses from the Atthasālinī are apparently more meaningful if referred to the contents of the Nakulapitāsutta, and this may suggest that Buddhaghosa reused passages from the Sāratthappakāsinī while writing the Atthasālinī.

Furthermore, the aṭṭhakathā shares some phrasing with other commentaries, like the Dhammapāla's Itivuttaka-aṭṭhakathā (Paramatthadīpanī, e.g. Iti-a CST4 I.1., PTS I.39); the latter, just like the Atthasālinī, does not have a ṭīkā to explain its phrasing. In this regard, the S-pt I.1 may well represent a lexicographical guidance for understanding (and translating) other parallel texts in Sutta literature, and a philosophical guidance for understanding those very parallels in Abhidhamma literature (e.g. Dhs-a 1007, PTS

351 and Vibh-a CST4 I.3, PTS I.6). There are also remarkable analogies between the classification of the training (*vinaya*) in the Nakulapitāsutta-ṭīkā and in Iti-a CST4 I.35, PTS I.110-111; for instance, both quote the stanza 1041 (as numbered in CST4) of the Suttanipāta (PTS 1035, p. 198), which is quoted also in the same paragraph of the Atthasālinī just mentioned (Dhs-a CST4 1007, PTS 351).

Whereas the presence of correspondences in Sutta and Abhidhamma commentaries indicates an underlying uniformity in Pali exegetical literature, the sub-commentary on the Nakulapitāsutta elaborates on this semantic link and provides buddhologists with methods of interpretation that pave the path to further studies.

In order to render the elucidating function of the commentaries, the translation of the root-text (and in some points, of the aṭṭhakathā) has been maintained slightly cryptic, in contrast with translations that try to convey a finite sense by integrating it with the related interpretations. On top of showing the importance of the respective exegeses, this approach to the translation may suggest a better understanding of the sutta itself. In fact, by shedding light on the phases of the exegetical process, it is possible to restore a certain flavor of lexical ambiguity in the root-text and to appreciate its rhetorical and pedagogical nuances. After examining the textual layers backwards, i.e. from the purāṇa-ṭīkā to the sutta, it will appear how the lexical ambiguity of the latter is intentional and finalized to enhance the ability to grasp the contents therein presented.

2. Translation of the Nakulapitāsutta⁴

Thus I heard. Once the Blessed One was living among the Bhaggas in Sumsumāragira, in the deer park, in the wood of Bhesakaḷā. Then the householder Nakulapitar approached the Blessed One, and after approached and saluted him, he sat at one side. When the householder Nakulapitar was sitting at one side, he said this to the Blessed One: “O Venerable, I am decrepit, grown old, long lived, I walked through the path, I have reached the [stage of] perishing, my body is afflicted, and I am in chronic poor health. O Venerable, indeed I see occasionally the Blessed One and the disciples of the Blessed One, who are worthy of consideration. May the Blessed One instruct me, o Venerable, may the Blessed One gradually instruct me, o Venerable: that would be for my long-time benefit and happiness.”

⁴ This translation is largely based on Bhikkhu Bodhi's work (2000). Differences are mostly due to the necessity to homogenize the root-text with its commentaries.

“This is so, householder, this is so! This body is afflicted, enveloped, it’s become an egg.⁵ Indeed whoever, householder, taking care of this body, acknowledged it as healthy even for a moment, what [could he be] if not a fool? Therefore, householder, you should practice this way: ‘although my body is afflicted, the mind will remain unafflicted’; this way, householder, you have to practice.”

Then the householder Nakulapitar gladdened and rejoiced for the speech of the Blessed One, [2] he rose up from his seat, paid homage to the Blessed One, made a circumambulation (*padakkhiṇa*), and afterward went to see the Venerable Sāriputta. Once he met the Venerable Sāriputta he paid homage to him and sat at one side. Then the Venerable Sāriputta said this to Nakulapitar the householder that was sitting at one side: “O householder, your faculties are brightened up, the complexion of your face is purified and cleansed. Didn’t you obtain them by listening to a Dhamma talk directly from the Buddha?” “How could it be otherwise?⁶ Just now, o Venerable, I have been anointed with the nectar of deathlessness of a Dhamma talk by the Blessed One.” “And how then, householder, have you been anointed with the nectar of deathlessness of a Dhamma talk by the Blessed One?” “Here, Venerable, I approached the Blessed One. After I approached and exchanged greetings with the Blessed One I sat at one side. And sitting there, Venerable, I said this to the Blessed One: “O Venerable, I am decayed, grown old, long lived, I walked through the path, I have reached the [stage of] perishing, my body is afflicted, I am in continuous poor health. O Venerable, indeed I don’t see often the Blessed One and the disciples of the Blessed One, who are worthy of consideration. Let the Blessed One instruct me, o Venerable, let the Blessed One gradually instruct me, o Venerable: that would be for my long-time benefit and happiness.”

⁵ See Bodhi 2000: 1044, n. 3. Similarly, the compound *aṇḍabhūtā* (become an egg) precedes *pariyonaddhā* (enveloped) in A CST4 IV.128, PTS II.132, where the metaphor of the egg is applied to *avijjā*. PTS editions read *addhabhūto* in the Saṃyutta passage and *andhabhūtā* in the Aṅguttara and in the Paṭisambhidāmagga (Paṭis CST4 I.117, PTS I.127: *aṇḍabhūto pariyonandho*; interestingly, Ñāṇamoli translates the dyad as “it is blind, it is enclosed in an egg [of ignorance]”, 1991: 128). Only in the Verañjasutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya the PTS edition reads *aṇḍabhūta* (and in the same dyad: *aṇḍabhūtāya pariyonaddhāya*), again referred to *avijjā* (A CST4 VIII.11, PTS IV.176). Conversely, the Burmese and the Sinhalese manuscripts of the root-text present *aṇḍabhūta*, just like the commentaries (Bodhi 2000, *ibidem*). I therefore prefer to read *aṇḍabhūta*, which also fits well with the meaning of *pariyonaddha*. The resulting translation “become an egg, enveloped” might be more suggestive than “weighed down, encumbered” (Bodhi 2000: 853) and it is not at odds with the other occurrences of the dyad.

⁶ I read here from the CST4 edition: *kathañhi no siyā*. The PTS editions reads *kiṃ hi no siyā*. Cf. the translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000: 854): “why not?”

“And, householder, didn’t you further ask in reply the Blessed One: ‘In which respect one may have the body afflicted and the mind afflicted, and in which respect one may have the body afflicted and the mind unafflicted?’”

[3] “We have come from far, Venerable, to apprehend the meaning of this speech in the presence of the Long-lived Sāriputta. May indeed the meaning of this speech be clear [in virtue of] the Long-lived Sāriputta.”

“Therefore, householder, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, Venerable”, the householder Nakulapitar replied to the Long-lived Sāriputta.

The Long-lived Sāriputta spoke thus:

“And how, householder, one has the body afflicted and the mind afflicted? Here, householder, an unlearned ordinary person who does not see the noble ones, inexpert in the Dhamma of the noble ones, untrained in the Dhamma of the noble ones, who does not see the good men, inexpert in the Dhamma of the good men, untrained in the Dhamma of the good men, views form as self, or self as possessing form, or form in the self, or self in form. He is obsessed [with this view]: “I am form, form is mine”. And for one who is obsessed with the idea “I am form, form is mine”, form changes, it becomes otherwise. And as that form changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort arise for him.

“He views feeling as self, or self as possessing feeling, or feeling in the self, or self in the feeling. He is obsessed [with this view]: “I am the feeling, feeling is mine”. And for one who is obsessed with the idea “I am the feeling, feeling is mine”, feeling changes, it becomes otherwise. And as that feeling changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort arise for him.

“He views cognition as self, or self as possessing cognition, or cognition in the self, or self in cognition. He is obsessed [with this view]: “I am cognition, cognition is mine”. And for one who is obsessed with the idea “I am cognition, cognition is mine”, cognition changes, it becomes otherwise. And as that cognition changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort arise for him.

“He views the compositional factors as self, or self as possessing the compositional factors, or the compositional factors in the self, or self in the compositional factors. He is obsessed [with this view]: “I am the compositional factors, the compositional factors are mine”. And for one who is obsessed with the idea “I am the compositional factors,

the compositional factors are mine”, the compositional factors change, they become otherwise. And as those compositional factors change and become otherwise, [4] sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort arise for him.

“He views consciousness as self, or self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness in the self, or self in consciousness. He is obsessed [with this view]: “I am consciousness, consciousness is mine”. And for one who is obsessed with the idea “I am consciousness, consciousness is mine”, consciousness changes, it becomes otherwise. And as this consciousness changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort arise for him. This way, householder, one has the body afflicted and the mind afflicted. And how, householder, one has the body afflicted and the mind unafflicted?

“In this regard, householder, a noble disciple who sees the noble ones, who is expert in the Dhamma of the noble ones, who is well trained in the Dhamma of the noble ones, who meets with good men, who is expert in the Dhamma of the good men, who is well trained in the Dhamma of the good men, he does not view form as self, nor self as possessing form, nor form in the self, nor self in the form. He is not obsessed [with this view]: “I am form, form is mine”. And for one who is not obsessed with the idea “I am form, form is mine”, form changes, it becomes otherwise. And as form changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort do not arise for him.

He does not view feeling as self, nor the self as possessing feeling, nor feeling in the self, nor the self in feeling. He is not pervaded [by this view]: “I am feeling, feeling is mine”. And for one who is not pervaded by the idea “I am feeling, feeling is mine”, feeling changes, it becomes otherwise. And as feeling changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort do not arise for him.

He does not view cognition as self, nor the self as possessing cognition, nor cognition in the self, nor the self in cognition. He is not obsessed [with this view]: “I am cognition, cognition is mine”. And for one who is not obsessed with the idea “I am cognition, cognition is mine”, cognition changes, it becomes otherwise. And as cognition changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort do not arise for him.

[5] He does not view compositional factors as self, nor self as possessing compositional factors, nor compositional factors in the self, nor the self in the compositional factors. He is not obsessed [with this view]: “I am the compositional factors, the compositional

factors are mine". And for one who is not obsessed with the idea "I am the compositional factors, the compositional factors are mine", compositional factors change, they become otherwise. And as compositional factors change and become otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort do not arise for him.

He does not view consciousness as self, nor the self as possessing consciousness, nor consciousness in the self, nor the self in consciousness. He is not obsessed [with this view]: "I am consciousness, consciousness is mine". And for one who is not obsessed with the idea "I am consciousness, consciousness is mine", consciousness changes, it becomes otherwise. And as consciousness changes and becomes otherwise, sorrow, lamentation, suffering and discomfort do not arise for him.

This way, householder, one has the body afflicted and the mind unafflicted."

Thus spoke the Venerable Sāriputta. The householder Nakulapitar was elated and delighted with the speech of the Venerable Sāriputta.

3. Translation of the Nakulapitāsuttavaṇṇanā (aṭṭhakathā)

Samyutta Nikāya-aṭṭhakathā, CST4 III.1, PTS II.249 ff.

[249] In the first section of the chapter on the aggregates, "among the Bhaggas" refers to a populated region with this name (Bhagga), whereas Susumāragira indicates the city of Susumāragira.⁷ It is reported that during its construction a crocodile emitted a sound⁸ and thus they named it Susumāragira. "in the wood of Bhesakaḷā" refers to a wood that received this name because it was inhabited by a *yakkhinī* called Bhesakaḷā. That deer-park was so called because it had been donated for the safety of a multitude of deer. The Blessed One was living in this grove, relying upon this community.⁹ The name Nakulapitar derives from the fact that he was the father (*pitar*) of a child named

⁷ PTS: *Suṃsumāragira*. The term *suṃsumāra* means crocodile, although in some lists of dangers wherein another designation for crocodile appears (*kumbhīla*), the correspondent *susuka* (which PED translates with 'alligator') is translated either as "shark" (Cātumasutta, M 67, CST4 II.166 ff., PTS I.460 ff., transl. Ñāṇamoli-Bodhi 2001: 563 ff.) or as "fierce fish" (Uṃibhayasutta, A CST4 IV.122, PTS II.124, transl. Bodhi 2012: 502). *Kumbhīla* and *susuka* / *suṃsumāra* might likely be two subspecies of Indian crocodiles.

⁸ *Saddamakāsi*. It occurs also in the Mahāsakuludāyisutta (M 77, CST4 II.239, PTS II.3), translated with "made a noise thus" (Ñāṇamoli-Bodhi 2001: 630). Cf. Malalasekera 1974: 1172-3.

⁹ Here I follow PTS. CST4 reads: *bhagavā tasmim janapade taṃ nagaraṃ nissāya tasmim vanasaṇḍe viharati*: "The Blessed One was living in this grove, relying upon this city in this community/region."

Nakula. “Decrepit” means decay-decrepit.¹⁰ “Grown old” means grown to the [stage of] perishing. “Long lived” means long lived since birth. “Walked through the path” means that he had walked through the three [stages] of the path [of life]. “Have reached the [stage of] perishing” means that he has reached the perishing which belongs in the last of these three stages. The “afflicted body” is the sick body. Indeed, this body is said to be afflicted because of the continuous dripping away of beauty. By distinction, there are three afflictions, namely the affliction of decay, the affliction of illness, and the affliction of death. Among these, though, this affliction of decay is meant as coming from the long duration of life, and the affliction of illness from the continuous sickness. “Chronic poor health”¹¹ consists in chronic and continuous sickness. The meaning of “I see occasionally” is “due to this affliction, coming as I wish is impossible and I get to see [the Blessed One] only sometimes, not all the time”. “Worthy of consideration” means [250] “worthy of increasing reflection”.¹² In virtue of

¹⁰ In accordance with the criteria briefly explained in the introduction, I have intentionally left these and other compounds without the prepositions that may indicate the kind of compound and relationship meant; this is to respect the structure of the root-text and commentaries, and notably because the explanation is given in the *ṭikā*. Conversely, Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation of the sutta combines the information provided by the root-text with the elucidations of the commentaries, although sometimes he intentionally dismisses the latter. Although this is a sensible choice when translating only a sutta, it may be less convenient and somewhat redundant when meaningful layers of exegesis are provided.

The compound *jarājiṇṇa* appears in several commentaries, often in similar circumstances. In the Milindapañha it is found in a twofold classification of death (*maraṇa*), i.e. untimely (*akāle*) and timely (*kale*) or at the appropriate time (*samaye*), clearly belonging in the latter case (Mil CST4 V.6.6, PTS 304-307). In the metaphor used in the Milindapañha, *jarājiṇṇa* would be ascribed to somebody who is mature, like a ripe fruit, in contrast with somebody who is injured, like a fruit “eaten by insects or beaten by clubs, etc.” (Horner 1969: II.133). The one who is *jarājiṇṇa* dies at the right time, for old age.

¹¹ Alternatively, ‘frequent’ or ‘reiterated’; *abhiñhātanka* in PTS edition and *abhikkhaṇātanka* in CST4.

¹² *Manobhāvanīyā*: it is probably a wordplay wherein two possible meanings are referred to. It is usually an appellative for prominent bhikkhus, and appears rarely in the Sutta Piṭaka, like in the Anāthapiṇḍikovādasutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (CST4 III.387, PTS III.261), where it is translated as “worthy of esteem” (Ñāṇamoli-Bodhi 2001: 1112). Walshe (1987: 385) translates its occurrence in the Dīgha Nikāya (CST4 III.49, PTS III.36) with “meditating”. Woodward, translating the identical phrasing in the Aṅguttara Nikāya (CST4 X.93, PTS V.185), relies on the commentaries and renders *manobhāvanīyā* with “who makes the mind to grow” (1972: 127). Likewise, Hare renders the reiterated occurrences of *manobhāvanīya bhikkhu* in A CST4 VI.27-28 (PTS III.317-322) with “a monk who is a student of mind” or “a monk who has made a study of mind” (Hare 1973: 225-227; the footnote 1 at p. 225, reporting the twofold commentary’s explanations, offers as an alternative translation “worshipful”). In translating the occurrence of the compound in the Nakulapītāsutta itself, Bhikkhu Bodhi rejects these interpretations and categorically excludes the meaning of cultivating the mind, i.e. meditating: “Manobhāvanīyā, used in apposition to bhikkhū, has often been misinterpreted by translators to mean ‘with developed mind.’ However, the expression is a gerundive meaning literally ‘who should be brought to mind’, i.e., who are worthy of esteem” (Bodhi 2000: 1043, n.2). On the other hand, the Saddanīti accepts both meanings, the one of paying respect, caring, and in alternative the one of cultivating, developing the mind (Sadd 1556, pp. 555-556). For all these reasons, it is difficult to render this compound in English language, which lacks a lemma implying both meanings. A possible solution could be to invent a compound like

[their] goodness, the mind flourishes when one sees these good ones, namely the great elders Sāriputta, Mogallāna etc. who are said to be worthy of consideration. “May [the Blessed One] gradually instruct [me]” means “may [the Blessed One] instruct [me] again and again”. The first discourse is called advice, the successive is called gradual instruction. The advice is the speech that penetrates the matter, whereas the [gradual] instruction is said to be, by means of the tradition and the lineage, about [the matter] non-penetrated [yet]. Therefore, advice and instruction are one in the meaning, and different merely in the letter.¹³

“*Āturo hāyam*” should be read as “*āturo hi ayam*” (this [body is] afflicted), in the sense of being like a plant whose beauty is constantly dripping away. “Become an egg” means become like an egg, fragile. Just like it’s impossible to play with an egg of a hen or of a peacock as it were a sports-ball, by grasping, throwing or striking it, because it would break, similarly a body of one who stumbles over thorns and stumps, become like an egg, would break: this is what “become an egg” means. “Enveloped” means enveloped by a subtle skin.¹⁴ For an egg is enveloped by the shell, and, in virtue of that, flies and mosquitoes cannot cut the skin and lurk, and thus cannot make the yolk ooze outside. But once they cut the skin therein, they can do as they wish. Likewise for one who is enveloped by a subtle skin. “What [could he be] if not a fool?” is tantamount to say “what else could he be than being a fool?” Just this is the meaning for “fool”. “Therefore” means “since this body is as such [in this condition], therefore...”¹⁵

“respectable-meditators”, but I am afraid that it would sound awkward in most contexts and would not convincingly overrule the objection of Bhikkhu Bodhi. Furthermore, besides the grammatical note in the Saddaṇṭi, there is no substantial evidence to assume that the wordplay is actually in the root-text, and not just devised by the commentators to ascribe a more poignant meaning to the compound. I therefore decided to translate it in accordance with Bhikkhu Bodhi’s glossa, and to explain here the discrepancy of the commentaries. Interestingly, in the commentary on the Ākaṅkheyyasutta (M-a CST4 I.65, PTS I.156), Buddhaghosa offers a suggestive explanation of *bhāvanīya* in terms of “respectful” (associated with the cognate *garu*), and mentions the reasons why one should be worthy of consideration: *bhāvanīyo ti addhā ’yam āyasmā jānaṃ jānāti passam passatī ti evaṃ sambhāvanīyo* (“worthy of consideration” means that he knows inasmuch he knows, he sees inasmuch he see, thus he is honorable).

¹³ These two approaches remind and somehow abridge the Puggalapaññatti’s classification of the types of disciples according to their ability to understand (cf. Endo 2013: 6).

¹⁴ PED (s.v. *taca*) translates *tacaparīyonaddho* as “with wrinkled (shriveled) skin”, which suggests that in this passage of the aṭṭhakathā there could be a word-play with “wrinkled” and “enveloped”.

¹⁵ I follow here CST4 (*tasmāti yasmā ayam kāyo evarūpo tasmā*), which provides a reasonable explanation to the passage from the *mūla* text: *tasmātiha te gahapati evaṃ sikkhitabba*. On the contrary, the PTS edition does not refer to the sutta, but employs *tasmā* in relation to the previous glosses from the commentary itself. It reads: *tasmā ayam kāyo evarūpo*, “therefore this bodhi has such form.”

“Went to see” here is like the instance when a king’s man,¹⁶ having gone to the presence of a king *cakkavatti* (an universal monarch), immediately afterwards goes to the presence of an adviser-treasure;¹⁷ likewise he, having gone to the presence of a *cakkavatti* of the good Dhamma, went to see the Venerable Sāriputta, wishing to express reverence to a general of the Dhamma. “Brightened up” (*vippasanna*) means well appeased (*suṭṭhu pasanna*). “Faculties” refers to the faculties that have the mind as their sixth. “Purified” means flawless, and “cleansed” is a synonym of its. It is said that one is cleansed for [his] freedom from defilements, not for being white. By seeing his cleansed state, [251] one deduces the brightness of the faculties. This is traditionally said to be the inferential understanding of an elder (*thera*).

“How could it be otherwise?” means “by which reason would it not be obtained?” And this is also the meaning for “obtained”. What does this illustrate? [It illustrates] the intimacy with the Teacher. It is heard that one gains this fatherly love since the very first time they see the Teacher, and if one is a laywoman (*upāsikā*) gains motherly love. In both cases, they call the teacher “my son”. And their affection does not lead to another existence. It is believed that for five hundred births this laywoman had been the mother, and this householder the father, of the Tathāgata. Furthermore, for five hundred births the laywoman had been the grandmother and the layman (*upāsaka*) the grandfather, and then the aunt and the uncle.¹⁸ So, for one thousand and a half existences, the Teacher had been grown by the hand of them. But since now he was not their son anymore, it would have not been possible for him to speak by the side of the father, and they would speak sitting by the side of the Teacher. For this reason, the Blessed One placed them on a prominent position by saying “monks, Nakulapitar the householder is the prominent of my intimate lay disciples, and likewise is the housewife Nakulamātar”.¹⁹ Therefore he, having explained this intimacy, says “how could it be otherwise?”

“Anointed with the nectar of deathlessness” here is not to be viewed as that anointment with the nectar of deathlessness refers to whatever knowledge, meditation, insight, path or fruit; on the contrary, it should be understood as that the sweet teaching of the Dhamma is like the anointment with the nectar of deathlessness.

¹⁶ This occurrence of *rājapuriso* contradicts PED (s.v. *rāja*), according to which the compound is found only in plural form.

¹⁷ Cf. PED s.v. *pariṇāyaka*.

¹⁸ For the translation of *cūḷapitar* and *cūḷāmātar* cf. Horner 1969: I.295 (from Mil CST4 IV.4.7, PTS 204).

¹⁹ Quoted from A CST4 I.257, PTS I.26; see Bodhi 2012: 1610, n. 138.

“From far” means having crossed the kingdom as well as the region. “An unlearned ordinary person”: this means exactly what is there said: “who does not see [often] the noble ones etc.” “The noble ones” (*ariya*) are so called because they ward off (*ārakattā*) defilements, because they do not progress (*irīyanato*) in loss but they progress in success, because they should be approached (*araṇīyato*) by the world with the devas; they are called Buddhas, solitary Buddhas, and disciples of the Buddha(s). Alternatively, in this case the noble ones are only the Buddhas. In this regard, he says “o monks, in this world with devas...etc.... a Tathāgata, a noble one.”²⁰ In “of the good men”, also, the good men are to be interpreted as the solitary Buddhas and the disciples of the Tathāgata. The good men correspond to the men who are splendid in virtue of their association with supra-mundane qualities. [252] Alternatively, all of them are said to be of two kinds: those good men who are Buddhas and noble ones, and solitary Buddhas and disciples of the Buddha(s). In this regard, he says:

Who is grateful, appreciative, wise,
He is a good friend and devoted to steadiness;
He does zealously what has to be done for the distressed,
Therefore, they call him “a good man”.

To this extent, a disciple of the Buddha is defined thus: “he is a good friend and devoted to steadiness.” The verse beginning with “who is grateful” refers to Buddhas and solitary Buddhas. One “who does not see the noble ones” should be understood as one who does not have the habit of seeing the noble ones, and does not exclaim “*sādhu*” when seeing them.²¹ He does not see in two ways, by eye and by intuitive awareness, and of these [noble ones] here it should be intended that he does not see them by intuitive awareness. The noble ones are either seen or not seen by these eyes, the physical eye and the divine eye, by catching only the appearance and not by

²⁰ Quoted from S CST4 V.1098, PTS V.435. Cf. Dhs-a CST4 1007, PTS 349 ff., trans. p. 452 ff.. According to the PED, *araṇīyato* could be a miscopy.

²¹ Pe Maung Tin and Carolyne Rhys-Davids, in their translation of a parallel passage from the Aṭṭhasālinī (Dhs-a CST4 1007, PTS 350), render *dassanā* with “perceiving” (1920: 453). The translation is per se correct and has the advantage of emphasizing the distinction between ordinary seeing and seeing through intuitive awareness (*ñāṇa*). Yet, the term “perceiving” does not convey the idea of visiting the noble ones as shown in the Nakulapitāsutta. The same gloss of *ariyānaṃ adassāvī* occurs in the aṭṭhakathā of the Mūlapariyāyasutta (M-a CST4 I.2, PTS 21), and in the translation of that sutta the compound is rendered by Bhikkhu Bodhi as “who has no regard with the noble ones” (1996: 83). Bodhi’s translation is in line with the ṭīkā, which relates the ‘non’seeing’ to a lack of respect, and suitable to the context of the passage describing someone unlearned (*assutavant*) and unfamiliar with the teachings of the noble ones (*ariyadhammassa akovido*). The interpretation found in the aṭṭhakathās, however, just indicates that an *ariyānaṃ adassāvī* is someone who does not frequent the noble ones and is not fully aware of their importance, and the narration of the Nakulapitāsutta seems to employ the compound with a slightly less negative implication than the one suggested in the Mūlapariyāyasutta.

resorting to the essence of the noble ones. Dogs, jackals and so on also see the noble ones by the eye(s), but they are not ‘seers’ of the noble ones.

Here there is this story: they say that one who ordained after being grown old, an attendant of an elder who had destroyed the outflows and used to live on the mount Cittala, one day went to do the alms-round with the elder, holding the bowl and the robe of the elder and following him from a close distance, and asked the elder: “Of what kind are those called noble ones?” The elder said: “Well, someone long-lived may hold the bowl and the robe of the noble ones; he may walk with them, do the primary and secondary duties, and yet he would not see the noble ones, such as, friend, difficult to see are the noble ones.” Even when this was said, he did not understand it. From this story, [it is clear that] seeing is not just seeing by the eye: seeing is seeing by intuitive awareness. He says thus: “What for, Vakkhali, should you see this corrupted body? Whoever sees the Dhamma, Vakkhali, sees me. Who sees me, sees the Dhamma” (S CST4 III.87, PTS III.120). Therefore, one “who does not see the noble ones” has to be understood as one who sees with the eye, who does not see by intuitive awareness the characteristic of impermanence and so on seen by the noble ones, who has not reached the Dhamma reached by the noble ones, who have not seen themselves the essence of the noble ones and the engendering²² qualities [elicited by] the noble ones.²³ “Inexpert in the Dhamma of the noble ones” means unskillful in the Dhamma of the noble ones, consisting of the foundations of mindfulness and so on. “Untrained in the Dhamma of the noble ones” means instead as follows:

The training (*vinaya*) is twofold, indeed, and each part is fivefold. |

Because of the absence of this [training], he is called untrained. ||

[253] This phrase, “the training is twofold”, refers to the training of restraint and the training of abandoning. Here, in regard with this twofold training, each specific training is in turn divided in five parts. The training of restraint is fivefold inasmuch it consists of restraint by moral discipline, restraint by mindfulness, restraint by intuitive awareness, restraint by patience and restraint by effort.²⁴ The training of abandoning is fivefold as consisting in abandoning by its opponent, abandoning by unclogging, abandoning by eradicating, abandoning by relaxation, abandoning by escape.

²² *Karadhamma*; I follow here Bhikkhu Bodhi’s rendering of the term (2012: 124) in his translation of the *Pasādakaradhammavagga* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (A CST4 I.363-381, PTS I.38). It is quite implicit that these qualities, arisen in the presence of the noble ones, foster confidence (*pasāda*) in them and in the Dhamma.

²³ Dhs-a 1007, PTS 350; transl. Pe Maung Tin, Rhys-Davids 1920: 454.

²⁴ I follow here CST4, which contains the complete list later commented in the *ṭīkā*.

In this perspective, one who is restrained by moral discipline is “one who possesses, who is endowed with this restraint by the ‘emancipating discipline’ (*paṭimokkha*).”²⁵ One who is restrained by mindfulness “protects the eye-faculty, undertakes restraint in regard with the eye-faculty.”²⁶

Ajita, about these streams in the world – said the Blessed One –
Mindfulness is the barrier to them;
I claim that restraint of the streams
Bars them by means of intense understanding.²⁷

This [above] is called restraint by intuitive awareness. One who is restrained by patience “is patient with heat and cold.”²⁸ One is restrained by effort if, “once a thought of sense-desire has arisen, he does not follow it” (*ibidem*). All this restraint is called either restraint or removal/training (*vinaya*), because of the constraint (*saṃvaraṇato*) or because of the removal/training of the physical bad conducts and so on that should be restrained or removed/trained (*vinetabba*). This is indeed how one should understand that training by restraint is subdivided in five parts.

Then, what is this abandoning which relies upon the nature of opposing which is proper of intuitive awareness and insights like the discernment between mind and matter and so on, this is the abandoning of whatever is detrimental²⁹ by means of any intuitive awareness coming from insight, like the light of a lamp dispelling darkness. [The abandoning of whatever is detrimental] includes [the abandoning] of the view of the collection [of aggregates] as [absolutely] real (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*)³⁰ by the determination of mind and matter, of the views of absence of cause and different cause by the comprehension of the conditions, [the abandoning] of perplexed speculation³¹ on this very [comprehension] by the overcoming of doubt in virtue of its

²⁵ Vibh CST4 511, PTS 246.

²⁶ This is part of the standard definition of restraint (*saṃvara*), which is explained as the protection of the six sense-doors, here epitomized by the first one, eye-faculty; this protection is performed by not clinging to the various characteristics of the sense-objects (cf. e.g. *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, D 2, CST4 I.213, PTS I.70).

²⁷ Sn CST4 stanza 1041; PTS stanza 1035, p. 198.

²⁸ See the *Sabbāsavasutta* (M2, CST4 I.24, PTS I.10), where patience (in respect to cold and heat, hunger and thirst, elements, offences, and other bothering factors) is one of the approaches recommended to abandon poisons (*āsava*). Cf. also A CST4 IV.114, PTS II.117-118; CST4 IV.165, PTS II.153; CST4 VI.58, PTS III.389 (a shorter discourse on the abandoning of the *āsavas*); CST4 X.71, PTS V.132.

²⁹ *Anatthassa pahānaṃ*. See Masefield 2008: 104, n. 4 (translating the same list in *Iti-a* CST4 I.1, PTS I.39).

³⁰ See the *Sakkāyasutta*, still in the *Khandhasamyutta* (S CST4 III.105, PTS III.159), and *Anālayo* 2006: 641-644. Alternative translation: identity (Bodhi 2000: 964).

³¹ *Kathaṃ kathī*, lit: “saying ‘how?’”; cf. PED s.v. *ajjhata* and *kathaṃ*.

counterpart (*aparabhāgena*), [the abandoning] of the clinging to the “I-mine” by understanding (*sammasana*) it as a bundle (*kalāpa*), [the abandoning] of the misperception of the path in what is not the path by designating (*vavatthāna*) what the path is and what the path is not, [the abandoning] of the nihilistic view by the vision of the arising, [the abandoning] of the eternalistic view by the vision of the perishing, [the abandoning] of the misperception of safety in what is dangerous by the vision of danger, [the abandoning] of the misperception of gratification (*assāda*) by the vision of the disadvantage (*ādīnava*), [the abandoning] of the misperception of delight by the contemplation of disinterest (*nibbidānupassanā*), [the abandoning] of the lack of desire of emancipating by the intuitive awareness of desire of emancipating, [the abandoning] of the absence of equanimity by the intuitive awareness of equanimity, [the abandoning] of the condition of going in the opposite direction of *nibbāna* and establishing the Dhamma by following that direction (*anulomena*), the abandoning of clinging to the impression of the compositional factors by being in the lineage (*gotrabhū*): this is called abandoning by the opponent.

[254] What is instead [the abandoning of] all those (*tesaṃ tesaṃ*) dhammas like the hindrances and so on by means of the concentration, which is divided in access-concentration and full concentration, and which, as the hindrances have the nature of proliferating, is similar to removing with a jar the plants (*sevāla*) that grow on the surface of water, this is called abandoning by unclogging.

That absolute abandoning by the absence of proliferation of the group of defilements associated with arising and expressed as “by the abandoning of the viewpoints etc.” in regard with one’s continuity for one who is walking this or that path, in virtue of the cultivation of the four noble paths, that is called abandoning by eradicating (*samuccheda*).³² What is instead the relaxation of the defilements at the moment of [attaining] the fruit, that is called abandoning by relaxation.

What is *nibbāna*, wherein all that is compounded has been abandoned by the getaway from the compounded, this is called the abandoning by escape. All this abandoning, being it abandoning in the sense of renunciation and training in the sense of removing, is called the training of abandoning. Or this is called the training of abandoning out of the factor of abandoning this or that, and because it brings about the training (*vinaya*). This is how it should be understood that the training of abandoning is divided in five parts. Since this training, classified concisely in two parts and in detail in ten parts, is absent for the unlearned worldly person, as there is no abandoning of what should be abandoned and the restraint is broken, and because of this very absence this [person] is called untrained. And this rationale is also present in this sentence: “one who does

³² Cf. Dhs-a CST4 1007, PTS 352, Iti-a CST4 I.1, PTS I.39.

not see good men, inexpert in the Dhamma of the good men, untrained in the Dhamma of the good men.” The meaning is identical. Therefore, he says: “Those who are noble, they are the good men. Those who are good men, they are the noble ones. What is this Dhamma of the noble ones, this is the Dhamma of the good men. What is this Dhamma of the good men, this is the Dhamma of the noble ones. Whether “noble ones” or “good men”, whether “the Dhamma of the noble ones” or “the Dhamma of the good men”, they are one, have one meaning, are the same and parts of the same thing, are suitable with each other, they are each just like the other.”³³

“[He] views form as self” here means that someone views form as self, he considers “such is the form, so am I, this me is that form, form [255] and self are one (not two: *advaya*). It is like if one were to call glow the flame of a burning oil-lamp. By thinking “what is the glow, this is the flame”, he views the flame and the glow as one, and likewise one views form and so on as self, he views them as one, he thus sees form through the view “it’s self”.³⁴ “Or the self as possessing form” means that, because of taking the self as formless, he views it as possessing form, just like a tree has a shadow. “Or the form in the self” means that, because of taking the self as formless, he perceives the form in the self, just like the scent in a flower. “Or the self in the form” means that, because of taking the self as formless, he views the self in the form, just like [he would see] a gem in a box. “Being pervaded” means that he thus upholds and supports the idea “I am form, form is mine”, having swallowed and accomplished it through the views affected by craving, due to [its] pervading and to [its] overwhelming. “And as that form... for him” means “to one who has clung to form this way.” This method applies also to feeling and to the other aggregates.

In this regard, “[he] views form as self” means that self is equated to pure form. “Or self as possessing form, or form in the self, or self in form, feeling as self ... cognition ... compositional factors ... consciousness as self” means that in these seven cases self is equated to formless. “Or self as possessing feeling, or feeling in the self, or self in the feeling”, and likewise by proceeding three by three in the [other] four aggregates, means that in these twelve cases self is equated to a combination of form and formless. Here “[he] views form as self ... [he] views feeling ... cognition ... compositional factors ... consciousness as self” means that in these five cases a nihilistic view is expounded, and in the remaining ones an eternalistic view: there are fifteen views of existence and five views of non-existence, and all of them are to be

³³ I did not find this passage in the Tipiṭaka, but only in commentarial literature, including Buddhaghosa’s *Aṭṭhasālinī* (Dhs-a CST4 1007, PTS 353), where it is equally preceded by *yathāha*.

³⁴ In the *Nandakovādasutta* (M 146, CT4 III.402, PTS III.273), this metaphor is extensively used by the bhikkhu Nandaka to illustrate the impermanent and selfless nature of the six sense-bases to an assembly of bhikkhunis led by Mahāpajāpatī.

known as obstacles in the path, not obstacles to heavens, because these are destroyed by the first path.³⁵

“This way, householder, one has the body afflicted and the mind afflicted” means that the body is per se afflicted, even the body of Buddhas, whereas the mind is said to be afflicted after it falls into craving, aversion, and delusion; this is what is demonstrated here.

By “and the mind unafflicted”, the unafflicted nature of the mind due to the absence of defilements [256] is here illustrated. In this discourse, ordinary mundane people are described as having both body and mind equally afflicted, whereas those who have destroyed the outflows should be understood as having the body afflicted and the mind unafflicted, and beings that are in the training as having the mind neither afflicted nor unafflicted. They are devoted, i.e. they devote themselves only to the quality of the unafflicted mind. [End of] the first [discourse].

4. Translation of the Nakulapitāsuttavaṇṇanā (ṭīkā)

Bhagga was [originally] the name of the princes of the region. Due to its expansion, their residence became one region, which was consequently named “Bhagga”, the meaning of which is the collective term read in “a community (or region) with this name.”³⁶ “In this grove” refers to a grove that had been originally given for the safety of deer. “Nakulapitar” means that in that city this householder was well-known because of his son, and therefore there is here the expression “Nakulapitar”, meaning the father of the child named Nakula. His wife was named Nakulamātar (mother of Nakula).³⁷

“Decay-decrepit” means decrepit because of decay, not because of illnesses etc. “Grown to the [stage of] perishing” means grown for the attainment of the growth to the [stage of] perishing, or decrepitude, not for the growth of virtue etc. “Long lived since birth” is because of the long time, or the long extension, since birth. “Has reached three stages” means that he has [sequentially] reached three stages, namely

³⁵ The path of stream-entry (*sotapattimagga*). Cf. Paṭi-a CST4 II.131, PTS II.450.

³⁶ The sentence plays with the twofold meaning of *janapada*, which refers to both a community of people and to their living place. I therefore translated *janapada* either as community or as region, in accordance with the specific referents of the term.

³⁷ A conversation between Nakulapitar and Nakulamātar is reported in the Nakulapitāsutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A CST4 VI.16, PTS III.295-298).

the first, the second, and the third. Therefore, “reached the [stage of] perishing” is because one has past the first and the second [stage] and arrived at the third. “Afflicted body” means that one does not enjoy the body because of the experience of painful feelings. “Sick body”, instead, refers to sickness, which [inevitably] carries pain. As a consequence of that, in the explanation of suffering contained in the Saccavibhaṅga,³⁸ illness is not mentioned when referring to suffering. “Because of the continuous dripping away of beauty” is along the line with “because impurity always trickles.” And he says “[the body] is said to be afflicted” because there is affliction for it. “By distinction” means in increasing order. Affliction refers to the afflicted, i.e. the struggling and tormented. The compound *jarāturatā* should be read as *jarāya āturatā* (affliction due to decay). “Worthy of consideration” means either that they cultivate their mind by increasing its wholesome side, or that they should be paid respect to because they are honorable. To explain “may [the Blessed One] gradually instruct [me]” he (i.e. Buddhaghosa) says “may [the Blessed One] instruct [me] again and again”, which means “may he instruct [me] point by point”. The successive teaching is for the sake of establishing [the tradition]. “About the matter non-penetrated [yet]” is an expression to say that one who acts this way has qualities and shortcomings. The phrasing “by means of the tradition” indicates this gradual instruction by relying upon the tradition. Lineage is a synonym for tradition.

“Become like an egg” is meant as a hyperbolic simile for the body, because the shell of an egg is frail and weak. Because of this, it is said “for an egg is...” and so on. “Fool” refers to whoever possessing this condition acknowledges health even for a moment.

“Brightened up” (*vippasanna*) means that [his faculties] are outstandingly appeased (*visesena pasanna*), exceeding their natural condition, and for this reason he says “well appeased”. He says “purified means flawless” because of the perfect purification of the complexion of the face of those who attain a form arisen with a mind appeased. For this reason, he says “for [his] freedom from defilements” and so on. This is the explanation of how the cause of the brightness of his faculties should be seen. [In the sentence “It is said that one is cleansed for [his] freedom from defilements, not for being white”], “one” is intended as the one who has [a perfectly purified] complexion of the face. “This is traditionally said to be the inferential understanding” means that he utters this expression out of his faultlessness.

“But since now he was not their son etc.” means that the utterance “Venerable, may the Blessed One admonish us in a future existence, where we would meet again” is

³⁸ Vibh CST4 190 ff., PTS 99 ff.

made just because of their relationship. The expression “the sweet teaching of the Dhamma is like” means that it is attained directly from the teacher, and “anointed with the nectar of deathlessness” should be understood as due to apprehending [the teaching] with affection and reverence for him.

“This” refers here to the two terms (*viz., assutavā puthujjano*). “Because they ward off defilements” means “because they have uprooted them in virtue of the path.” The meaning of “in loss” is “in no-gain”, “in no-goal”. Alternatively, it means “wrong means”. “Because they do not progress” means “because they do not move forward.” “Success” is gain, goal, and [right] means. “Because they should be approached” means “because they should be attended.” The substantiation of the sentence (*padasiddhi*) should be understood by the method of exegesis (*niruttinayena*) concerning the first applications of meaning, the latter instead [are determined] by means of grammar. Then, seeing that the word “noble” applies also to those ordinary persons who exert themselves with a pure heart, like “those noble ones whose bodily action is purified”,³⁹ and that on the other hand, in virtue of the reaching of the noble path and of its all-transcending nature, it should be meant as the noble essence, he says “Buddhas etc.” Then, the meaning of “good men” is explained by unequivocally expounding that “solitary Buddhas and disciples of the Tathāgata are good men” too. Also, since the essence of the noble good men is non-contextually⁴⁰ homogeneous (*abhinna*), it is said “alternatively, all of them...”

“To this extent, a disciple of the Buddha is defined” means that a good friend is definitely desirable because of the not arising of the first path (*paṭhamamaggassa anuppajjanato*) without the voice of another. “Good friend” also corresponds specifically to the Blessed One. In this regard, it is said: “Relying on me as a good friend, Ānanda, beings, that have the nature of being born, are liberated [from birth], etc.”⁴¹ He is “devoted to steadiness” because he has reached conviction based on knowing (*avecca-pasāda*). As it is also said: “my disciples do not transgress the practice assigned by me.”⁴² “The verse beginning with ‘who is grateful’ refers to Buddhas and

³⁹ Bhayabheravasutta, M 4, CST4 I.35, PTS I.17.

⁴⁰ *Nippariyāyato*. Alternative translation: literally (Masefield 2008:160, of Iti-a CST4 I.16, PTS I.63, and 2009: 726, from Iti-a CST4 I.100, PTS II.143).

⁴¹ S CST4 I.129, PTS I.88; S CST4 V.2, PTS V.3.

⁴² This passage is quoted from the Udāna (Ud CST4 45, PTS 55) and from the Pahārādasutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A CST4 VIII.19, PTS IV.201). Here steadiness is represented by the simile of the ocean: *seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, mahāsamuddo ṭhitadhammo velaṃ nātivattati; evameva kho, bhikkhave, yaṃ mayā sāvakānaṃ sikkhāpadam paññattam taṃ mama sāvakā jīvitahetupi nātikkamanti*; “O monks, just like the ocean has the nature of steadiness and does not overflow the shore, likewise, o monks, my disciples do not transgress the practice assigned by me, not even if it is a life-death matter.”

solitary Buddhas”: here “who is grateful” means that he acknowledges what has been done; “appreciative” means that he renders manifest and known what has been done. Solitary Buddhas indeed acknowledge the benefit done through several hundred thousands of eons, and render manifest what has been done by accepting objects that bring about mindfulness and so on. Then, they zealously perform duties for the one who suffers the suffering of saṃsāra, and they can do that by themselves. A Sammāsambuddha, instead, acknowledges and renders manifest the benefit done and the ground for the fruits of the path for innumerable thousands of eons. Like a lion, he performs the duties of a Buddha by uttering Dhamma teachings thoroughly and zealously (*sabbattha sakkacca*).⁴³ The noble ones are said to be seen in this practice, and the not undertaking of this practice, that is to say not having the habit of seeing the noble ones or not exclaiming “sādhu” when seeing them, is a lack of respect: this is how they should be understood. “Not seeing by the eye”, means that the eye here is not the one called the physical eye, but it is the divine eye, and in fact he says “or by the physical eye”. “The essence of the noble ones” means that the noble ones are defined as such according to their practice (*yoga*), and they are to be known as having the nature of fruit of the path.

“Here” means in regard with the nature of seeing, viz. of knowing and seeing. The “story” is the instrument to illustrate the sense intended here. “Even when this was said” means after he had thus made a reference to himself⁴⁴ by an informative suggestion (*aññāpadesena*). Dhamma may mean either the super-mundane (*lokuttara*) Dhamma, or the Dhamma (teaching) of the four truths. “The engendering qualities [elicited by] the noble ones” are either the contemplation of impermanence and so on, meaning that impermanence and so on would be thoroughly contemplated (*vipassiyamāna*), or the four noble truths. “Untrained” means that he has not trained himself and has not practiced by means of the practices of high moral discipline (*adhisīla*) and so on. He is called “untrained” because of the absence of the training of restraint etc., and he (Buddhaghosa) says “the training is twofold etc.” to illustrate them. “Restraint by moral discipline” should be understood as the restraint through the ‘emancipating discipline’ (*pāṭimokkha*), in the sense of not transgressing physically or verbally. “Restraint by mindfulness” is the protection of the [sense-]faculties, and this then occurs just as mindfulness. “Restraint by intuitive awareness” means that after saying “I claim that restraint of the streams”, the following expression “bars them

⁴³ The CST4 here has two typos (*jānanti* instead of *jānāti*, and *karonti* – twice – instead of *karoti*), which are not present in the parallel passage in M-pṭ I.2.

⁴⁴ *Attupanāyikaṃ*; cf. S CST4 V.1003, PTS V.353; Bodhi 2000: 1796 translates with “applicable to oneself”.

by means of intense understanding” explains the restraint of defilements, described as streams, namely ignorance, bad conduct, views affected by craving, and the remaining defilements; this shutting down (*pidahana*) should be understood as the intuitive awareness which eradicates [defilements]. “Restraint by patience” is that component that occurs as endurance, or absence of aversion, and some call it “intense understanding”.⁴⁵ Restraint by effort occurs just like effort by means of the removal of thoughts of sense-pleasure and so on. “Abandoning by its opponent” is the abandoning of this or that element by means of this or that element. “Abandoning by unclogging” is abandoning by means of unclogging. This method applies also to the remaining parts.

“With this restraint by the ‘emancipating discipline’ (*paṭimokkha*)” and so on is the explanation for restraint by morality and so on. The meaning should be found in the passage beginning with the phrase “one who possesses”, quoted from the Vibhaṅga⁴⁶ that, by saying “having reached etc.”, illustrates the classification of restraint therein contained. “Of the bad conducts and so on” means of the verbal and physical bad conducts reckoned as bad behavior, the negligence reckoned as carelessness (*muṭṭhasacca*), or the indolence consisting of lack of intuitive awareness, and impatience typical of covetousness and so on. “Because of the constraint” means because of the shutting down (*pidahanato*); “because of the removal/training” (*vinayato*) means because of the removal/training of the deformity (*virūpavattiyā*) related to body, speech and mind, or because of the removing of physical bad conducts and so on, or because of the adjustment deriving from having cut off the crookedness related to the body and so on. Constraint and training/removal are to be understood as preventing the arising of the physical bad conducts and so on that may potentially arise when there is a concomitance of conditions (*paccayasamavāye*).

“This abandoning” is the connection. Why is it said “intuitive awareness and insights like the discernment between mind and matter and so on”? Isn’t it that intuitive awareness and insights that dispel the doubts about the conditions for the discernment between mind and matter [derive] from stopping [these doubts] by fully grasping them? This is the truth, and it is indeed said to emerge out of the resolution to intuitive awareness and insight. This is only mind and matter, it is no self and does not belong to a self, and this is how the designation of ‘mind and matter’ consists in

⁴⁵ Cf. Iti-a CST4 I.35, PTS I.111.

⁴⁶ Vibh CST4 511, PTS 246. The passage which the commentary and the sub-commentary refer to reads: *saṃvutoti. Iminā pātimokkhasaṃvarena upeto hoti samupeto upāgato samupāgato upapanno sampanno samannāgato. Tena vuccati pātimokkhasaṃvarasaṃvuto ti.*”

the intuitive awareness of its occurring. The view of the body as real is about the body reckoned as the five aggregates being existent, or it is the view itself about this body, and this view of the self occurs as follows: “he views form as self”. The comprehension of the conditions is the intuitive awareness consisting of the comprehension of the kammic conditions, like ignorance and so on, of this ‘mind and matter’. The view of the absence of a cause occurs as “defilements of beings have no cause, no condition.”⁴⁷ The view of the odd cause (*visamahetuditt̥hi*)⁴⁸ is the view that occurs in such a way that⁴⁹ “the world occurs or does not occur occasionally (*aṇukāla*), spontaneously (*pakati*), in virtue of Pajāpati, in virtue of Purisa, or in virtue of another Lord.”⁵⁰ “On this very” means “on this very comprehension of conditions.” “By the overcoming of doubt” means that the origin of mind and matter [is to be understood] in terms of kammic conditions and so on, and likewise by the intuitive awareness that dispels doubt in regard with the three times, past, future [and present] as well. “Of perplexed speculation (*kathamkathībhāvassa*)” is tantamount to the ongoing doubt (*saṃsayappavattiyā*) “was I in the past? Wasn’t I in the past?”⁵¹ “By understanding it as a bundle” means by the intuitive awareness and insight proceeding by means of the understanding attained by arranging the five aggregates in eleven areas in the following guise “whatever form, whether past, future or present etc.”⁵² “Of the clinging to ‘the I-mine’” means “of the clinging to ‘the self and what belongs to the self’”. “By designating what the path is and what the path is not” means by purifying the intuitive awareness of what the path is and what the path is not. “Of the misperception of the path in what is not the path” refers to the misperception that takes a mere resemblance [of the path] which is not the path as if it were a path really arisen. When one correctly sees the arising of the compositional factors and comprehends it as “these compositional factors arise this way according to their

⁴⁷ See e.g. the Aṇṇakasutta, M 60, CST4 II.100-101, PTS I.407.

⁴⁸ There are alternative translations that may help understand this locution: “fictitious-cause doctrine” (Ñāṇamoli 1999: 530, 867); “fictitious-cause view” (Ñāṇamoli 1999: 721), “random causality” (Masefield 2008: 104); “the view with dishonest reason” (Wayman 1999: 7); T.W. Rhys Davids: irregular causation (1910: 46).

⁴⁹ The following list is similar to the one used by Dhammapāla in the commentary on the Udāna (Ud-a CST4 55, PTS 344) to elucidate the refutation of the idea that the world and the self could be made by an external cause (*paraṃ kato*; Ud CST4 55, PTS 69).

⁵⁰ *Issara*. Cf. the usage of the compound *issaranimmānahetu* in the Devadahasutta, M 101, CST4 III.9, 20, PTS II.222, 227, and in the Tithāyatanādisutta, A CST4 III.62, PTS I.174.

⁵¹ This is a passage quoted from the Sabbāsavasutta, which describes the *āsavas* as wrong directions of the mind, and states that a practitioner should see the snares lying behind those attitudes (M 2, CST4 I.18, PTS I.7).

⁵² This explanation occurs almost identically in the Sammohavidanī, in the section defining and analyzing the five aggregates (Vibh-a CST4 I.3, PTS I.6; see Ñāṇamoli 1987: 5-6).

corresponding cause, but they do not cease thus”, then it is said “[the abandoning] of the nihilistic view by the vision of the arising.” The comprehension in terms of “where does eternalism come from?” is when one sees the end of compositional factors such as “these compositional factors occur undestroyed, but whenever arisen they cease without being compounded again (*appaṭisandhikā*); therefore, it is said “[the abandoning] of the eternalistic view by the vision of perishing”. “By the vision of danger” means “by the intuitive awareness of what is present in terms of danger” (*bhayatūpaṭṭhānañāṇena*). “In what is dangerous” means “in the five aggregates which are dangerous, because of their opposition to the supreme comfort (*parama-assāsa*) reckoned as the quenching of all suffering, and because they are the source of any danger whatsoever. “[The abandoning] of the misperception of safety” means [the abandoning] of the arisen misperception in terms of safety, security. What is called “misperception of gratification” corresponds to the ongoing misperception [dominated by] gratification in the five aggregates tainted by appropriation, and it is also called “inclination to attachment” (*ālayābhīniveso*). “The misperception of delight” here is referred to the ongoing misperception [dominated by] enjoyment, and it is also called joy (*nandi*). “The lack of desire of emancipating” is clinging (*ādāna*). “Absence of equanimity” means attachment (*sālayatā*), i.e. the lack of disinterest in regard with the compositional factors. “In establishing the Dhamma” [is tantamount to] in the dependent co-arising. “The condition of going in the opposite direction” corresponds to clinging to eternalism or nihilism, or to the delusion concealing causes and conditions. “The condition of going in the opposite direction of *nibbāna*” is the crookedness towards compositional factors, or the delusion concealing *nibbāna*. “Clinging to the impression of the compositional factors” means that without the abandoning of this defilement, insight does not let go of the impression of the compositional factors, and this defilement is called “attachment to fetters”; or, the abandoning of clinging to the impression of the compositional factors is just the overcoming [of this defilement].

In “[the hindrances] have the nature of proliferating”, the meaning of proliferating is just “pervading”. In the expression “dhammas like the hindrances and so on”, the words “and so on” include *vitakka*, *vicāra*, and the other factors of concentration, as well as defilements supporting hindrances. This is a reference to that complete abandoning that comes from the cultivation of the four noble paths and by means of the non-proceeding [of defilements etc.]. However, what is that determines the abandoning? The answer is “the [four] noble paths”, and the meaning should be intended through the phrase “out of the cultivation of them and by means of the non-proliferation” [of defilements etc.]. “Associated with arising” here means that after

one has performed the four paths and the penetrations into the four truths, by means of them he has to abandon whatever greed he recognizes at the moment of its arising, and he has to abandon it along with what has the nature of arising. Because of what is said in the Saccavibhaṅga of the nature of arising of all the defilements, the viewpoints and so on are said to be “associated with arising”. The quality of relaxation is pacification.

The getaway from the compounded is the absence (*abhāva*) of the essence (*sabhāva*) of the compositional factors.⁵³ “All that is compounded has been abandoned” means that all that is compounded has been got rid of, which is tantamount to decomposition.⁵⁴ The compound *pahānavinayo*, according to the first meaning, [could be split as] abandoning and removing. According to the second [meaning], instead, abandoning means that it is abandoned, and the term *vinayo* should be referred to it (i.e. the training consisting in abandoning).

The meaning of “the restraint is broken” derives from the absence of restraint, and is that the quality of restraint is lost. This includes the restraint that is not been undertaken yet: restraint is accomplished by the undertaking, and in its absence it does not occur. “Noble ones” means noble in the very sense of the word. The meaning of “they are [the same]” is that they are this and not else. “Suitable [with each other]” is in the sense that each one has the same nature of the other, meaning that a good man has the same nature of a noble one, and a noble one has the same nature of a good man.

“This me” is the viewpoint of the self that sustains the conjecture on the self. The belief that assumes the self is expressed as “the self is the bond between the intellect and me”. “One (not two: *advaya*)” means deprived of duality. It should be understood that, after taking the glow and the flame as undistinguished, and considering the flame like the glow, one would see them as one thing; similarly, it should be understood that after holding the conjecture that form is self and after taking the form observed as self, one would see them as one thing. Here the expression “form is self” means that taking the self as form whereas there is no self in form is like taking the glow as the

⁵³ Cf. Abh-ṭṭ CST4 775: *saṅkhatanissaṭṭattā vimutti*: liberation is the getaway from the compounded.

⁵⁴ *Visaṅkhāra*, a cognate term of *asaṅkhata* (the uncompounded, i.e. *nibbāna*). The term is used in the stanza 154 of the Dhammapada, which tells the final victory of the Buddha over Māra: *gahāraka diṭṭho si puna gehaṃ na kāhasi | sabbā ete phāsuka bhaggā gahakūṭaṃ visaṅkhitaṃ | visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā ||* “You have been seen, house-builder, you will not build up the house again. All the rafters have been broken and the roof has been dismantled. The mind has reached decomposition.”

flame, and it is called “the non-dual perspective”. These similes are expressed to indicate how one takes [two things] as not different, and not because one should literally view the self as the glow etc. He does not view form in the self in terms of control or ownership. “Or the form in the self” indicates the self as being essentially the receptacle (*ādhāraṇa*) of the form itself. “Or the self in the form” means that he perceives through the [wrong] perception of the form as being the receptacle of the self. “Being pervaded” means that after wrongly clinging to the set of the five aggregates by view-cravings leading to being pervaded, he sustains [this view]. Therefore, he says “due to [its] pervading” and so on. “This method applies also to” means that that method of the commentaries about the aggregate of form, expressed in terms such as “in this regard someone views form as self”, should be likewise understood in regard with the aggregate of feeling and so on.

The expression “equated to pure form” refers to form alone, unmixed with formless. “Formless” is the pure formless due to the absence (*aggahitattā*) of form. The expression “and likewise by proceeding three by three in the [other] four aggregates” means that the combination of form and formless by counting three by three in the [other] four aggregates is called self, and the counting is accomplished by including the formless dhammas released from feeling etc. with the form of the meditative object (*kaṣiṇa*) and all the formless dhammas. “In these five cases a nihilistic view is expounded” means that after reckoning those [material] and those [immaterial] dhammas as self, there is their annihilation. On the other hand, a follower of a [false] view, after taking form as self in the remaining fifteen cases, does not dismiss the notion of permanence because, having combined it with the form of the meditative object, he does not see its arising etc.; for this reason, he follows the eternalistic view by holding the eternity of something. “Obstacles in the path” are those caused by seeing wrongly. “Obstacles to heavens” are those due to not having attained the course of non-action. The views of non-existence, non-causality, and non-action are the views [holding] the course of action.

“Body” means the physical body, the only one that is [inevitably] afflicted, because it has the nature of the outflows. “After it (the mind) falls into craving, aversion, and delusion” refers to its continuous proliferation of craving, aversion, and delusion, which have not been abandoned. “Here” means in this discourse. “Demonstrated” concerns with the condition of being afflicted. “Due to the absence of defilements” means “due to one’s attainment of the pacification of the defilements abandoned.” The expression “beings that are in the training [are described] as having the mind neither afflicted [nor unafflicted]” refers to having the mind afflicted because of the

attachment to the defilements abandoned or because of the attachment to the defilements not yet abandoned. “They devote themselves only to the quality of the unafflicted mind” out of the condition of affliction due to the defilements of their own mind or [of the mind] of ordinary people following the cycle [of rebirths].

End of the commentary on the Nakulāpitasutta.

Abbreviations

A	Aṅguttara Nikāya
Abh-pṭ	Abhidhammāvatāra-purāṇaṭīkā
CST4	Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka, 4th edition
D	Dīgha Nikāya
Dhs-a	Atthasālinī (Dhammasaṅganī-aṭṭhakathā)
Iti-a	Paramatthadīpanī (Itivuttaka-aṭṭhakathā)
M	Majjhima Nikāya
M-a	Papañcasūdanī (Majjhima Nikāya-aṭṭhakathā)
M-pṭ	Majjhima Nikāya-purāṇaṭīkā
Mil	Milindapañha
Paṭis	Paṭisambhidāmagga
Paṭis-a	Saddhammappakāsinī (Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā)
PED	Pali-English Dictionary (Rhys Davids - Stede)
PTS	Pali Text Society edition
Sadd	Saddanīti
S	Samyutta Nikāya
S-a	Sāratthapakāsinī (Samyutta Nikāya-aṭṭhakathā)
S-pṭ	Linatthappākasinī III (Sāratthapakāsinīṭīkā; Samyutta Nikāya-purāṇaṭīkā)
Sn	Suttanipāta
Ud	Udāna
Ud-a	Paramatthadīpanī (Udāna-aṭṭhakathā)
Vibh	Vibhaṅga
Vibh-a	Sammohavinodanī (Vibhaṅga-aṭṭhakathā)

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